

U.S. Army nears pick for multibillion-dollar deal

By JACK WEIBLE

One of the U.S. military's biggest contract awards in the training arena is on target to be announced this spring. Two industry teams are chasing the contract to take over live, virtual and constructive training for the next decade.

Selection of the team to run the Army's Warfighter Field Operations Customer Support program, better known as Warfighter FOCUS, is expected to take place in April. The change in acquisition strategy from the service's Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training and Instrumentation (PEO STRI) first took root two years ago and could be worth \$3 billion to \$11 billion to the winning team over the next 10 years. The contract would begin Nov. 1, after a phase-in period beginning in May, according to PEO STRI.

Warfighter FOCUS will consolidate all requirements for live, virtual and constructive (LVC) training — now held by three contractors — into one large support contract. The breadth of skills carried by the companies on the winning team is expected to result in faster technology development and economies of scale so that commanders at any Army installation who need training support for their soldiers can turn to PEO STRI through the program.

"The consolidation will enhance stewardship of taxpayer dollars by achieving efficiencies in management overhead, labor and materials, and by providing visibility of system level sustainment and operations costs," PEO STRI said in written responses to questions.

At present, Raytheon Technical Services holds the contract for live training within PEO STRI. Computer Sciences Corp. (CSC)

carries the contract for virtual training, and General Dynamics the one for constructive. All of those contracts expire Oct. 31.

Because of the impending source selection, the companies vying for the omnibus contract have, for the most part, been tight-lipped. The team led by Raytheon and CSC that formed more than a year ago to chase the contract, the Warrior Training Alliance, declined comment, while its competitor, the Warfighter FOCUS Alliance that is headed by a quartet of companies — General Dynamics, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman and Saab — responded with written answers from Larry Retta, vice president of the Army Solutions Division at General Dynamics Information Technology division.

Although it remains undetermined just how many training and simulation systems will eventually come under the umbrella of Warfighter FOCUS, the program has a large scope. Existing systems that will quickly migrate to Warfighter FOCUS include the Combat Training Center instrumentation systems, the tactical engagement simulation systems, gunnery and maintenance training systems, flight simulators and close combat tactical training systems, according to PEO STRI.

That number will grow as the office's program managers "field new systems and transition them to the service industry for sustainment," PEO STRI said.

Each contending team has heavy hitters on its side. Along with Raytheon and CSC at the Warrior Training Alliance, team members include companies with deep experience in LVC training such as Boeing, CAE, Cubic, BAE Systems, Rockwell Collins and SAIC.

The Warfighter FOCUS Alliance (WFA) offers similar strengths with General Dynamics — which purchased former co-team

leader Anteon last year — Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman and Saab.

Both teams also have extensive lists of small businesses to meet PEO STRI's mandate that 15 percent of the contract's worth be executed by small businesses.

Retta said the WFA has centered its bid around the recognition that "strengths, weaknesses and common technicalities" exist within the three training domains and that it then works to minimize the weaknesses and combine the strengths.

WFA also would use single-point management at each site coming under Warfighter FOCUS, assigning a single company within the team to be responsible for the resources and collaboration with the military "customer."

"The WFA management and organization is a practical response to PEO STRI and site customers rather than striving to force-fit existing [life-cycle costs] management structures and processes," Retta said.

Another aspect of WFA's planning, he said, is to adopt a staffing approach at the affected systems by using common labor categories that will enable similar skill sets. That will reduce nonproductive time and provide flexibility during surge times without necessarily costing the Army more.

"We further maximized staff capability with the use of cross-training of technical knowledge within basic skill sets," Retta said. "Incorporated in our staffing approach is formal and informal concurrency training. All WFA members have established training budgets and comprehensive internal training programs."

Although Warfighter FOCUS merges the three training domains, it does not immediately add funding to PEO STRI to implement the changes, according to the office.

"However, we do expect that the efficiencies gained in consolidation will be leveraged by Army camps, posts and stations throughout the world. The installations may decide to send their discretionary training funds to procure training support from the Warfighter FOCUS contract, thereby increasing the funds sent to PEO STRI." ■

Team members

Each of the two teams contending for the potentially lucrative contract for Warfighter FOCUS with the U.S. Army Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training and Instrumentation has a deep well of members. The teams and their large-business members:

Warfighter FOCUS Alliance

General Dynamics Information Technology
Lockheed Martin
Northrop Grumman
Saab

The Warfighter FOCUS Alliance also has 10 small-business members.

Warrior Training Alliance

AAI
BAE Systems

Boeing
CAE USA
Camber
Computer Sciences Corp.
Cubic Applications
DRS Technologies
EDS
FATS — Fire Arms Training System
MRO Software
Moog (part of IBM)
MPRI (part of L-3 Communications)
Raytheon Technical Services
Company

Raytheon Virtual Technology Corp.
Rockwell Collins
SAIC
Sparta
SRI International
Symantec
Titan (part of L-3 Communications)
Viecore

The Warrior Training Alliance has 45 small-business members.

Sources: Warrior Training Alliance, Warfighter FOCUS Alliance